



## **HHS Circular C-025**

### **Health and Human Services Ethics Policy**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this circular is to inform health and human services agency employees of an updated and revised health and human services (HHS) Ethics Policy.

The HHS Ethics Policy is intended to ensure that HHS agency personnel maintain the highest standards of conduct in the performance of their duties while serving our clients and the taxpayers of Texas. As public servants, HHS employees should act fairly and honestly, avoiding even the appearance of impropriety. The HHS Ethics Policy requires HHS employees to do more than the law requires and less than the law allows. The failure of the HHS Ethics Policy to address or prohibit a specific action or behavior does not mean that the action or behavior is condoned or permissible.

All HHS employees must become familiar with this Ethics Policy, as well as any changes made to it, and comply with its provisions. Violation of this Ethics Policy may form the basis for disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

#### **Legal Bases**

In 2007, the Texas Legislature amended Texas Government Code Section 572.051 (which establishes standards of conduct for state officers and employees) to require each state agency to adopt a written ethics policy for its employees that is consistent with the standards and provisions of Subchapter C of Chapter 572 Government Code. Pursuant to the authority of the Executive Commissioner, as set out in Chapter 531 of the Texas Government Code, this HHS Ethics Policy is adopted in compliance with Chapter 572 of the Texas Government Code for use by all HHS agencies – the Health and Human Services Commission, the Department of Aging and Disability Services, the Department of Family and Protective Services, and the Department of State Health Services.

#### **Discussion/Summary**

The HHS Ethics Office was created in February 2015 with a goal of, among other things, to establish clear and practical ethics guidelines that are consistently interpreted and applied across all HHS agencies. The revised HHS Ethics Policy is one step in establishing those guidelines. The



intent of the revisions is to include the most recent addition to laws pertaining to post state employment laws, also known as “revolving door” laws.

### **Policy**

The HHS Ethics Policy can be found at <http://hhscx.hhsc.texas.gov/ethics-office>.

### **Inquiries**

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